

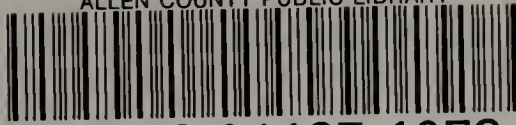
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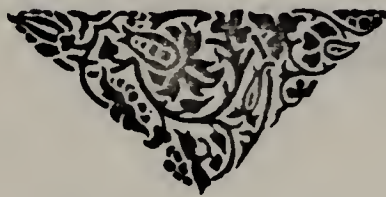


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PIONEER DAYS
of RANGELEY
MAINE



Published by
J. SHERMAN HOAR
RANGELEY, MAINE
1928

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J. Sherman Hoar

This Little Book

Containing The Early History of Rangeley, is founded on stories and facts gleaned from the older generation, who personally and intimately knew the principal characters who are mentioned in this sketch.

Published by
J. SHERMAN HOAR
Son of
ANSON M. HOAR
Son of
DANIEL HOAR
Son of
DAVID HOAR
Son of
LUTHER HOAR,
First Settler
of
Rangeley,
Maine

*Builded they well for the future,
Pioneer settlers of old.
Often in song and in story
Their valorous deeds are told.*



RANGELEY

THE early history of Rangeley Lake Region is one that will hold the interest of all those, lovers of the Rangeley Lakes. Many believe that Squire Rangeley, from whom was derived the euphonic name, was the first settler who came in the year 1825. But in the summer of 1815, Luther Hoar, with two companions, went from Madrid across the mountains to spy out the Dead River Region because a rumor of the presence of hostile Indians had reached that little hamlet.

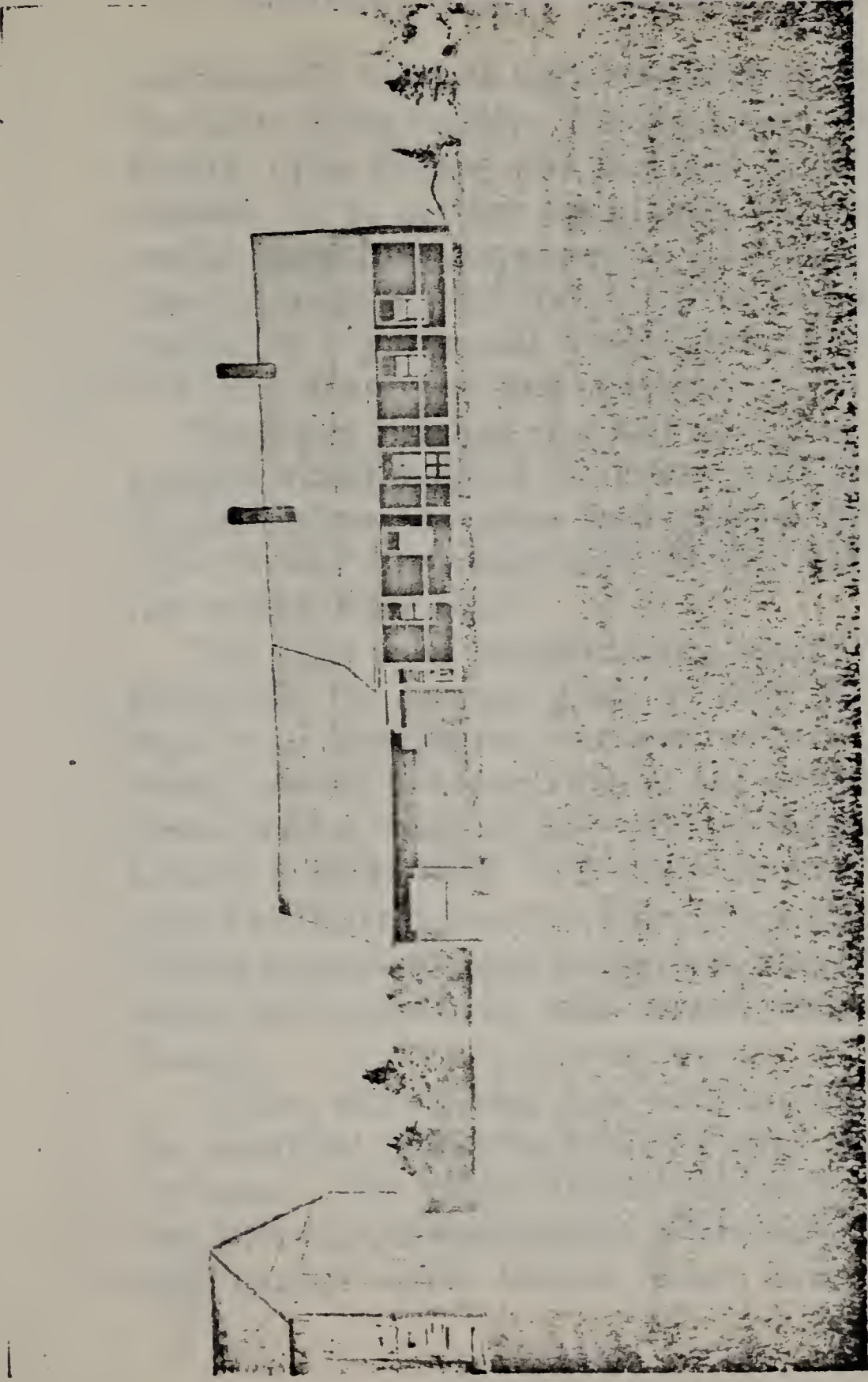
Luther Hoar was a born pioneer. But a year had gone by since he and his family had removed from the historic town of Concord, Mass., to Madrid, and here he was already spying out a more remote wilderness. No Indians were seen, but the man was so impressed by the country he had traversed that he stopped to explore a big lake whose beauty and loneliness had penetrated his soul. Here on a northern height, looking southward over the lake, with the wonderful landmark,

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

Saddleback, on his left hand and Bald Mountain on his right, he felled trees and made a clearing. He then followed his companions back to Madrid. The next year he came through again, burned over his clearing and planted potatoes. After harvesting a good crop, he housed them in a pit which he had dug deep for that purpose, and carefully covering them to protect them from the long winter's cold, struck out for home. This was in the fall of 1816.

In early April of the next year might have been seen an American father and mother with a sturdy brood of youngsters trudging onward over the snow which lay hard and firm beneath the spruce and pine of this northern wilderness. On its kindly, supporting glaze they dragged behind them on hand-made sledges their scanty stock of household goods and plenishings. Spring then, as now, was the recognized time for moving, but for far different reasons.

The family consisted of John, David and William of the older ones; Joseph, who had attained to the age of thirteen, and the three youngsters, Daniel, Sally and Mary. Luther, the oldest, had been left behind, adopted by a family in Madrid. The total numerical strength of the family has not yet been reached, for on one of those sledges, wrapped warmly against the winter's cold,



Part of the Original Squire Rangeley House

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

and securely tied in a big bread-mixing trough, lay the baby of the family—Eunice Hoar. Of all this family, little Eunice was destined to be the most famous, for as she lay sleeping in her improvised cradle, something happened to her which was destined to be told wherever a native and a summer visitor, or a guide and a sportsman get together and talk about the first settlers.

They had reached the top of one of the long heights which marked their way, and the nucleus of the future township had paused for breath, when it was discovered that Eunice and the mixing trough were gone.

The little band retraced their weary way, disheartened, for on that glaze of snow no track or trace was discernible. At last, after a long and weary search, the sharp eye of one of the children discovered a twig at one side of the trail, that looked a little bent. Off they started at right angles to the trail, and far down the mountain side, lodged against a giant evergreen, they found the bread tray and in it, still sound asleep,—Baby Eunice.

At last, after a long day's travel, they came to the beautiful lake which the Indians had named Oquossoc. The region around this part of the lake was later named Greenvale. Here they found the huge dugout which Luther Hoar had used and

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE



Rangeley Village About 1860

hidden the previous fall. Although amply able to contain the whole family, for it was made from one of the primeval pines which gave to Maine its famous sobriquet, they yet must walk the remaining four miles across on the ice, for the lake was frozen hard and fast.

When they reached the headland which Luther Hoar had selected as the site of their future home, they built their camp-fire and prepared for the first of many nights in the open. A bitter disappointment awaited these hungry, tired pioneers. When Deacon Hoar went to the pit which he had stored full of potatoes, he found it empty. The potatoes were gone!

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

During the winter, the Indians had discovered them and had fared sumptuously on the first fruits of Luther Hoar's industry. After their scanty supply of provisions was exhausted, until their first crop was harvested in the Fall, the family lived principally on ground nuts. So thoroughly was this form of food searched out and devoured that there have never been seen any ground nuts in Rangeley from that day to this.

It was on the fifth of May, 1817, that Deacon Hoar and his family built their first camp-fire. They had laid the foundations of a settlement which was destined to become famous under a name not their own, but that of a stranger and an alien.

There is yet another member of the family to be accounted for. Over a year had gone when, one July day, Joseph, now a big fourteen-year-old boy, got into the big dugout and paddled across the lake. Here he struck out along the spotted line for Madrid. When he returned, two days later, he walked more slowly, for he was accompanied by a woman long past middle age. She is known in the spoken traditions of Rangeley as "Old Mis' Dill." She arrived in the log cabin of the Hoar family none too soon, for on the night of July 10, without other aid than that of this old midwife, in that far outpost of the northern frontier the heroic

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

pioneer mother brought forth the first white child of the future township—Lucinda Hoar.

The old midwife liked the place and in a year's time she came back, accompanied by her husband, this time to stay.

The first birth naturally calls to mind its antithesis, and, appropriately enough, Freeman Tibbetts, a noted guide, the son of Lucinda Hoar, is the narrator.

“ ‘Old Mis’ Dill’ was the first white person buried here,” said he. “She wanted to go to Madrid to see her folks, so Uncle Dan’l (he was the youngest son) walked across the lake with her and set her upon the trail to Madrid. ’Twas in the winter. As they went by Dixon’s Island, she see a pine that was all bent over. ‘What is that?’ says she, for she was old, seventy years, and more too, I guess. Uncle Dan’l he telled her what it was. ‘That looks like a house waitin’ for me,’ says she.

“Well, Uncle Dan’l, he put her on the trail and she went on. She got as fur as ‘The Height of the Land,’ and then she must have got tired and turned round and come back. Some folks come in from Madrid that day and they see where she had broken off some twigs and set down and they followed her trail down the mountings and across the lake to Dixon’s Island, and there they found her

Squire Gilbert

Farmington

= Falls -

and family

from the bank

from the

from the great danger

of the mountain -

Farmington N.H. July 3rd 1819

Squire Gilbert

Dear Sir

Major Paul

informs me you will have finished
for them this week; this is therefore
to say that I should be obliged if
you would, immediately thereupon
come and finish the material part
of my mill, that is to say the flume,
the Great Breast wheel, the two
shafts with their drums, and the
necessary cog wheel &c, and Mr.
Sturtevant may if he chuses, finish the
Order Cut screw & the Slide for
hauling up. You will therefore
have a separate Department, which
will prevent any Interference with
each others; I will give you two
dollars for say what you please and
the usual wage, on your part
I will be glad to see you
with immediate answer directed to me
to save of time, whatever, possibly, will
stand me in better stead than
But it is important to me to see you

Original Letter Written by Squire Rangeley

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

right under that bent old pine tree—froze to death!”

There was a pause, then, “Did you ever hear how they got their bread?” he asked, reverting to his grandfather’s family.

“Grandfather Hoar used to put a bushel of corn on his back and walk to Strong. It was twelve miles to Madrid; from Madrid to Phillips was six miles, and from Phillips to Strong was six miles more, and he walked there and back in three days and carried a bushel of corn besides. He was a powerful man.

“He was some kin to Senator Hoar of Massachusetts,” went on Freeman after a pause. “It was a number of years after he came in to Rangeley before a horse could get through, but after that grandfather used to ride to Massachusetts and back to see his relatives most every year.

“I remember well the last time he went. He come home and rode into the barn. His wife she come out to see him. ‘How do you feel?’ says she. He was a-hangin’ up his saddle when he answered her. ‘Fine,’ says he, and with that he dropped at her feet—stone dead.”

The year 1825 saw a happening that meant great things for this little settlement along Oquossoc Lake, for by this time other families had come

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

in,—the Rowes, the Thomases, the Kimballs and the Quimbys in the order named.

This happening was the advent of the man after whom the whole country roundabout this beautiful lake was to be named and even the great chain of lakes itself,—Squire Rangeley. He and his wife and two sons and two daughters came through on the spotted line. It must have been a strange experience for this English gentleman and his family to travel in such fashion, and stranger yet must it have seemed to them when they emerged upon the borders of the lake that this sparsely cleared country was to be their home.

Who was Squire Rangeley and how happened he to come to this remote settlement of the northern frontier? He was of a good old Yorkshire family which owned Tweed Mill near Yorks, England, and who, according to a great-grandson now living in England, went out to America to redeem a bad debt. His wife's people were the Newbolds, likewise of Yorkshire, their place being at Intake, North Sheffield. A third son was left in England with his mother's family during their proposed brief sojourn in America. Mr. Kimball, who ran the first stage line which connected Rangeley with the outer world, said: "It was the time of a great land speculation. Land was lotted out and explored and then Rangeley came."

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

Even with this explanation it might still be a puzzle to account for the fact that an English gentleman, but recently arrived in New York City, should come to know of land in a northern outpost of New England. A hunter, guide and patriarch who had heard much of Squire Rangeley from both his father and mother, gave the reason.

“Rangeley got this place by his folks. It fell to them through the Seventeen Hundred and Seventy-Six War, through depredations they had committed.” It may take the reader some time to puzzle out the meaning of this statement.

“This here was a certain tract of land, set off, you understand. So when he came and found people had settled it, he was pleased. He built a grist-mill and saw-mill for them.

“He was a kind man. ‘Don’t haul your lumber way down to the mill. Cut my lumber,’ he would say. Of course there was plenty of lumber then, but Burnham wouldn’t have acted that way.”

Of this same Burnham we shall hear more, later.

“He didn’t make the people who had settled here pay for their land; he was only too glad to have the place settled. He claimed he come here fur his health, but he came to get rid of this township.

THE RANGELEY LAKES,

*The "Adirondacks" of New England, situated in Western
Maine, near the New Hampshire and Canada borders.*



RANGELEY LAKE HOUSE, RANGELEY, ME.

Rangeley Lake House,

J. A. BURKE, PROPRIETOR.

One day from Boston into the "Heart of the Wilderness."

Fine Scenery, Excellent Trout Fishing,
Steamboat Excursions, Delightful Rides.
Good Accommodations, Moderate Prices.

Early Advertisement of John Burke on Land Now Occupied
by Rangeley Tavern

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

“When he built his house it was before the saw-mill was built, and the biggest part of it was done by hand labor. In them days, they would saw two or three logs in a day, two men would. I don't know just where they lived at first, but it must have been in a log house till their own was built.”

Let us describe this house, which, for its location and the circumstances under which it was built, seems almost as much of an achievement as one of the pyramids.

All around the house between the clapboards and the plastering ran a brick wall. There were brick partitions, hidden by plastering, between the rooms. The great kitchen contained a big brick oven, the other rooms had brick fire-places. Besides the kitchen and dining-room, the “Mansion Part” as the villagers still speak of it, contained four rooms, two on the ground floor and two on the floor above. Underneath all was the cellar hewn out of the solid rock.

It would have been a house of note in Portland; for this locality it was a veritable castle.

Of the original house only two rooms remain,—the kitchen and its connecting dining-room. Every vestige of a brick has disappeared, gone to the village two miles away to assist in its upbuilding. The “Mansion Part” has likewise gone to

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

the same place, where it served as a separate dwelling until destroyed by the fire which burned up Rangeley, in August, 1876.

The floors of the remaining rooms deserve a parting word, for they are made of half logs of the real "Punkin Pine," some of them twenty-seven inches in diameter, and if one goes down cellar he can gaze up at the scalloped ceiling above him, made by the reverse side of these same pine logs.

Deck Quimby, a well-known Rangeley character, thus described the Squire: "He was a good man, Squire Rangeley was, he paid people what they asked. My father worked for him seven months and got this farm. Uncle Dan Quimby dug the old Rangeley well. That well is forty-two foot deep. It took Uncle Dan seven months and he got a hundred acres fur it. Good land, too. It's the Alton Quimby Farm, now.

"It was while my father was workin' fur Squire Rangeley that he met my mother. She lived in Phillips but she come here to work for Squire Rangeley. She was the first hired girl that was ever in the Town of Rangeley. Her father was a blacksmith and he made her a shovel and a pair of tongs fur a wedding present and he made my father a chainhook.

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

“But all Squire Rangeley’s tools come from England. He didn’t have any of them made here. He got everything from England.

“He wouldn’t go to Boston and he wouldn’t trust anybody in Boston or Portland, either. All he knew was England.

“There was two tradin’ vessels that did his business for him. It took a year, and weather had to be pretty good or it would take longer. These tradin’ vessels would come as fur as Portland. Then they’d put the things into smaller boats and come as fur as Hallowell and from there on teams to Madrid. Then from there they’d bring ’em through by the spotted line.

“They had to take account of stock every little while to see how low they were gettin’. Still, if the vessel happened to be three weeks late, they would get pretty short of some things.

“He used to say to my father, ‘Go, tap on the barrel of rum, David.’ The Squire, he was afraid the rum would run out before the other barrel got here. He had a barrel on the way all the time. He had two barrels and he used to keep them goin’ back and forth to England. It was cheaper doin’ that than buying a new barrel every time.

“While the cellar of his house was bein’ built, every day, just such a time, he’d pass each man down a glass of liquor.

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

“His money would come from England once a year in an iron box. If the vessel had sunk, that would have gone, too.

“One time the salt gave out. You know salt had to come from England, too, like everything else. Well, one year, the vessel was so late that when it got here, the sheep was salt hungry. Squire Rangeley, he thought he'd give 'em the salt himself, so he let down the bars and stepped inside. Them sheep smelled the salt and was on him in a minute. They jumped on him and knocked him down, and if my father and some others hadn't heard him call, he'd 'a' been killed. That night he says to my father, 'You couldn't put a pin point on my body but their damned huffs hev been there!'

“He was a dreadful neat man. He wouldn't have the hawgs near his house and all the slops had to be carried away down the hill and thrown into the swamp. He said they worked their way through the ground, or something like that.

“He was an Englishman—he was funny,” said Deck, as if the one were necessarily the corollary of the other. “He claimed new-turned ground was healthy. He never held a plough himself but he would walk all day in a furrow. He always wore a rubber coat to keep out the heat. He used to say to my father, 'I don't see how you can stand the heat, in your thin shirt. Here I be in a rubber

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

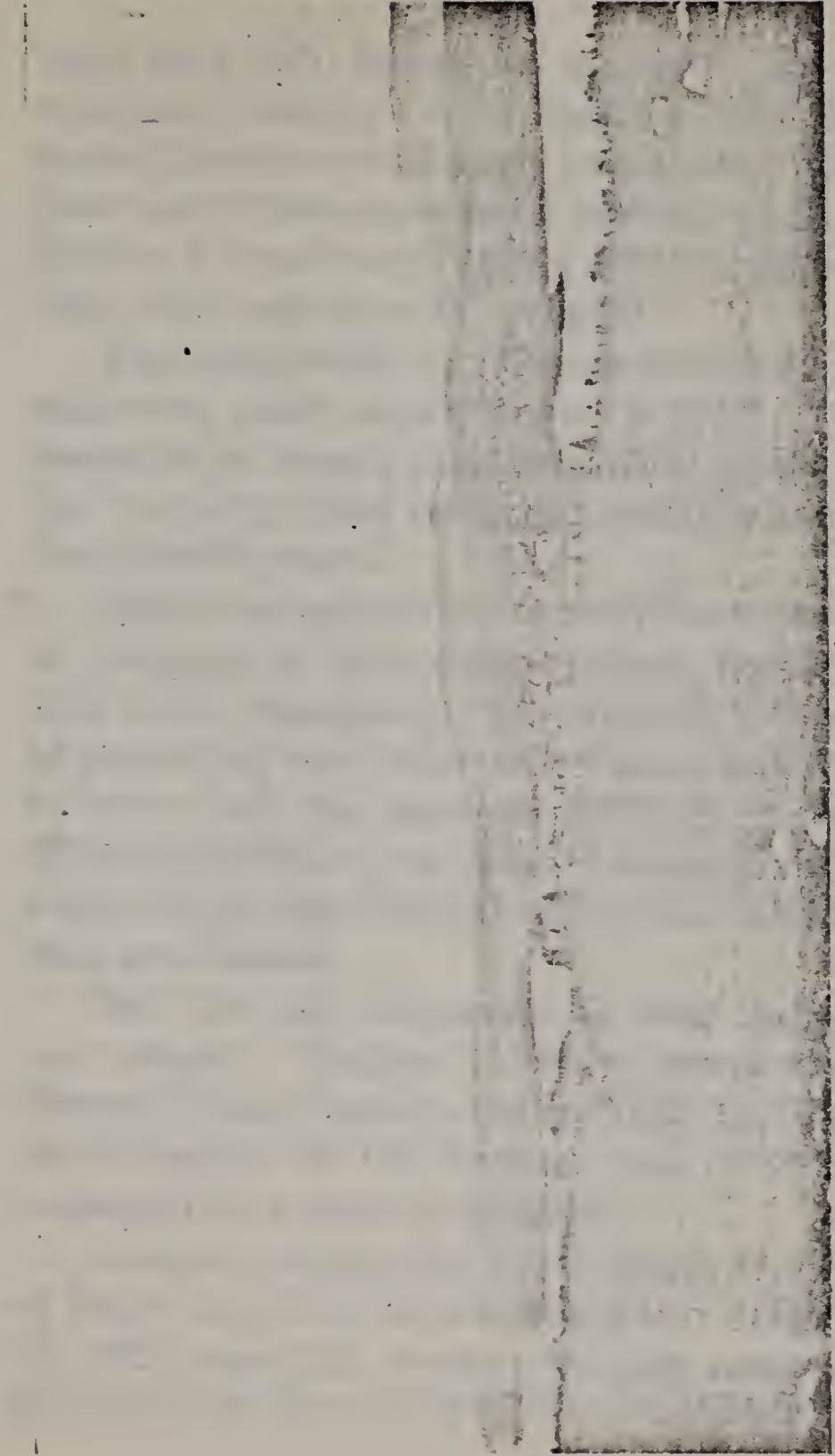


A Day's Catch of Rangeley Beauties

coat and a heavy coat under that, and I'm most sweltered.'

"But he was a nice man. He paid all wages right down in money. He would pay a man twelve dollars a month. My mother, she got fifty cents a week the first year she worked for him and a dollar and a half a week the year after.

"My mother had to learn to cook the English way for the Squire and his family but she cooked our way for the men; and the Squire's children got hold of it and liked it. I suppose they must have told their father and mother for, after awhile, Squire Rangeley would come out in the kitchen and say to her, 'Now, then, Happy, make some of



View of Town at Publication of This Book

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

them nice light flakes for dinner.' He meant our saleratus biscuit. The English like their bread baked hard—sort of logy, you know. They got so that they liked our way of cookin' meat, too. The Squire, he was very fond of little pigs, baked. Oh, they were real sportin' people!"

The years went on. The saw-mill and the grist-mill were built; and likewise a road of more than ten miles in length (the first of its kind) to connect the township, and its great product lumber, with the outside world.

When one considers the difficulties that stood in the way of these enterprises, the isolation of this little community, the well-nigh impossibility of procuring any labor other than hand labor and, to crown all, the immense difficulties in the way of transportation, one stands amazed at the results achieved by this English gentleman and his American auxiliaries.

But the last undertaking was the proverbial last straw. Before it was completed, Squire Rangeley had come to realize that his ideas for the development of the region were premature and belonged to a later generation.

Another reason for their going was the death of their daughter, Sarah Rangeley. She died Dec. 25, 1827, aged 19 years. On the banks of Sandy River in the Town of Phillips was made her grave.

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

At the time of the big freshet of 1869, this grave as well as many others, was washed away.

In the almost Arctic cold of a Rangeley winter, the life of the young girl went out. As no medical aid had been available, neither was there any consolation of the clergy. To use the language of an old man who as a little boy had seen the English Squire in his latter days at Rangeley, "Squire Rangeley sent a man for a good man, whom he liked, to preach the funeral sermon."

Over the deep snow of that far-off winter, the body of the young girl was drawn on a hand sledge to Phillips. Here it lay, unburied, for many months, the dear hope of the sorrowing family being to take it with them to that England to which they looked forward to return before long.

Things fell out far differently, and August 4, 1841, found them in Portland whence Squire Rangeley writes Seward Dill, Esq., concerning an offer which the latter had made him for the property at the lake and also about a law-suit which he was having with Mr. Burnham in New Hampshire.

It was during the residence in Portland, which lasted two or three years, that the Squire was preparing for his fitting. He eventually sold the Township of Rangeley to that Mr. Burnham who has been mentioned more than once in these chronicles. According to the son of Rangeley's first

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

hired girl, Deck Quimby, the Squire owned a large tract of land in Virginia. "He and one of his boys went to Virginia one winter and liked the climate better. They found that no one had meddled with their land." He and his family then departed to Virginia where "They kept slaves, one hundred and fifty or that amount." Neither he nor any member of his family ever returned to that beautiful lake country to which he had given not only a name but its first real impetus toward civilization. Nor did they ever return to that England which they regarded so highly. Both sons went through the Civil War, James being a colonel in



Noonday Lunch Under the Pines

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE



Overlooking Rangeley Lake

the Southern army, and their descendants are yet living in Henry County, Virginia.

Thus the English country gentleman left his impress upon two widely different sections of America. In that land where he had expected but to conclude a business venture, he found a country and a grave.

And now we come to Burnham, Rangeley's last real squire, as he may be called, for he was the last entire owner of the township save only for a strip of land at its eastern end which Squire Rangeley had sold to another man.

There are probably more stories told in connection with Burnham than with any other man

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

who has ever been connected with Rangeley in any capacity whatsoever, be it farmer, guide, sportsman or landed proprietor.

In person he was tall, "Kind o' big through his shoulders," and of ruddy complexion. Wore a full beard. "He used to wear a black swallowtail coat, a white vest, and a tall, black fur slick hat. He used to go like a gentleman on horseback, all rigged up."

This was the appearance of Squire Burnham as he came riding into Rangeley, one fine morning, to take possession of his lately acquired domain. The new proprietary, like his predecessor, was to live at "The Old Rangeley Place." Unlike his predecessor, he was, although past middle age, unmarried; and consequently a man named Elliot looked after the place while his wife kept house for the new Squire. To say that Elliot looked after the place is not quite correct, for, whenever he was at home, Burnham kept a sharp supervision. One instance will be sufficient to show the fine scrutiny to which he subjected his hirelings. One day they were haying and he being present, and observing that the grass grew sparsely in places, ordered the mowers to skip those spots with their scythes whenever they came to them; this being in order to save the expense of just so much of the men's time as would be employed in



Camp Life in Maine Woods

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

mowing an insignificant quantity of grass. Of course, not being versed in the science of mowing, his order caused just the opposite effect to that intended, as the effort of lifting the scythe and carrying it a few feet took as long or longer than it would to have done the mowing; while the grass left standing was a source of annoyance and hindrance to the hay-makers who came after.

Mention has been made of the Squire's age. Up to the time of his death no one in Rangeley knew how old he was. With simple or deep guile, plans were laid to entrap him into a categorical statement, but he, keener witted than any of his adversaries, saw through them all ere they came to the point and was always ready with an answer whose form never varied. Upon one occasion he remarked that he had been present when Boston's first mayor had been inaugurated. One of his auditors with that broad brow of calm innocence which the Yankee knows so well how to assume, said carelessly, "How old were you at that time, Squire Burnham?" The habitual answer came quick as a flash: "None of your business, damn you!"

The English Squire, with training, feeling, and traditions entirely foreign to his surroundings and surroundings, had yet been liked and respected. His American successor was just the reverse. He,

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE



Aeroplane View of Rangeley, Showing Narrow Neck of Land Town Is Built On

like his predecessor, came to make money, but his methods were a total overturning of all that had gone before. He was as like to Squire Rangeley as is a man who tears down to one who builds up. The result is written in the interior of "The Old Rangeley Place." In the lower right-hand corner of one of the upper panels of a door belonging to the dining-room is a small hole, the original sharpness of whose outline has been smoothed over by a long lapse of time.

The story goes that one evening Squire Burnham was sitting in the stately "Mansion Part" of his newly-acquired manor-house, reading by candlelight, when a bullet whizzed close by his head

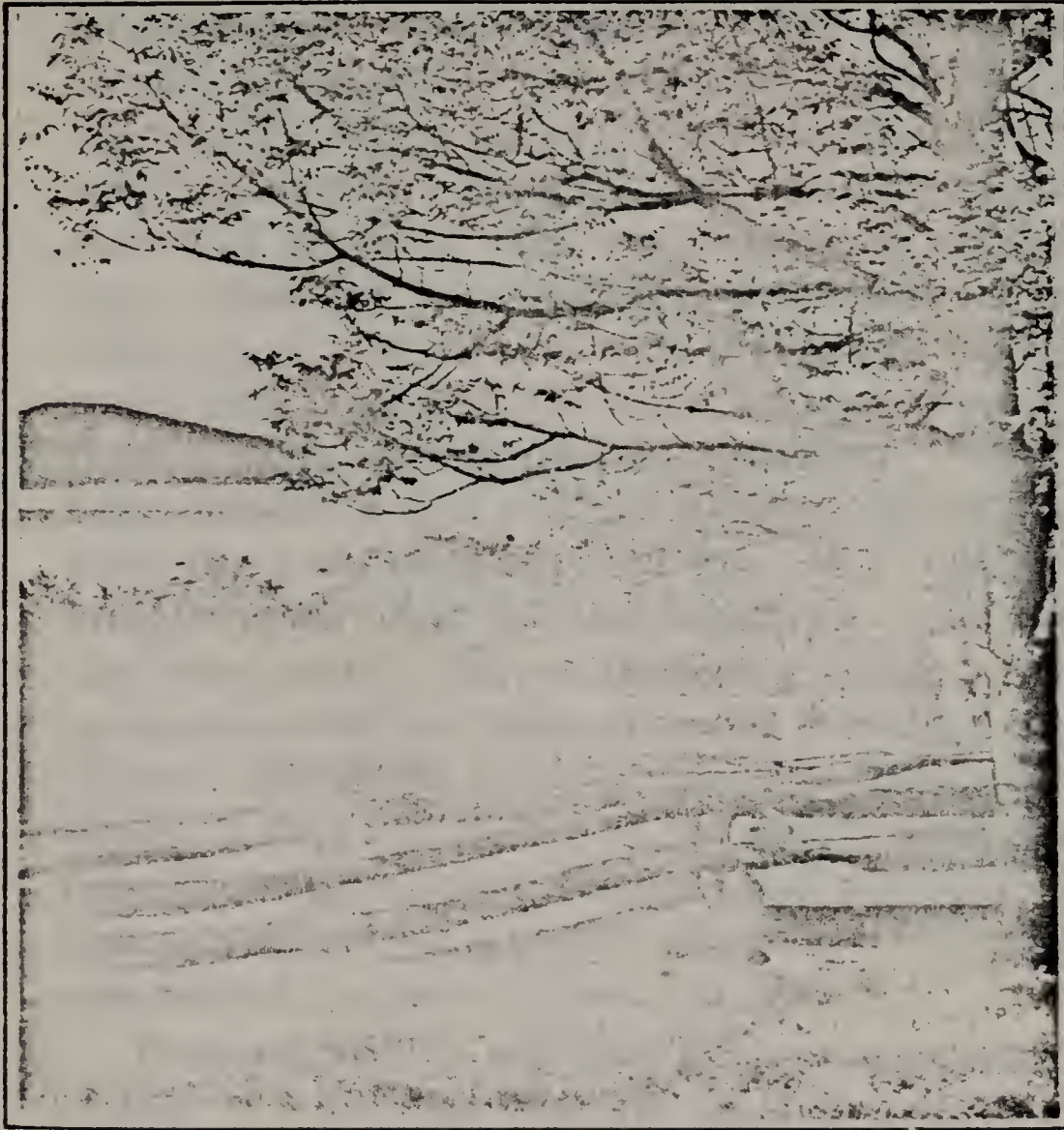
PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

and on through the door beyond. The Squire being a man of great readiness of decision, did not stop to make inquiries or to debate upon the manner of his going but, with a bound, made for his rock-hewn cellar, where he spent the rest of the night. Upon another occasion he was forced to seek the shelter of his rocky fortress by a volley of stones coming through a window in line with which he was sitting.

What was the cause of the murderous feeling among the people of this settlement toward their Squire? It is not far to seek. As has been said before, both the proprietors of Rangeley wished to make money—with this difference: One sought to make money by spending it, the other by gathering it in.

Nothing was too small to escape Burnham's net. The story is still told of a woman sick in bed with a child and of Burnham going in and having the feather-bed on which she lay dragged out from beneath her to satisfy a debt which her husband owed him.

Upon another occasion, a debt being overdue, Squire Burnham had one-half the roof of the log house in which the debtor lived sawn off and removed. This was in the month of March, and in the month of March it is yet winter in Rangeley.



Cedar Rail Fence of Pioneer Days

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

In still another case, the debt being perhaps of a more serious nature, the Squire was going to have the man sent to prison. The latter, unable to pay, pleaded the poverty that would fall upon his family, should he be taken away, but Burnham was inexorable. Finally, the man proposed a prison of his own. He would agree to stay in his own cellar for four months, promising never to come out of it in all that time if it might be that he could still continue his work and so support his family. To this Burnham assented. The man kept his word and did not appear above ground until the four months were up. Is it possible to imagine with what joy the debtor saw the light of day once more? For a Rangeley cellar is not an agreeable abiding place even in summer, and in winter! Burnham, coming upon him unexpectedly, claiming that due notice of the man's emergence from his self-imposed dungeon had not been given him, pronounced a sentence of another four months and forced the man to carry it out.

It is not known whether it was in consequence of this last inhumanity, or of some one not recorded, or whether it was simply a result of the general detestation in which the man was held that this next thing was sprung upon him. He was driving along in his gig out of sight or sound of any habitation when it was borne in upon him that

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE



Another Airplane View of Rangeley

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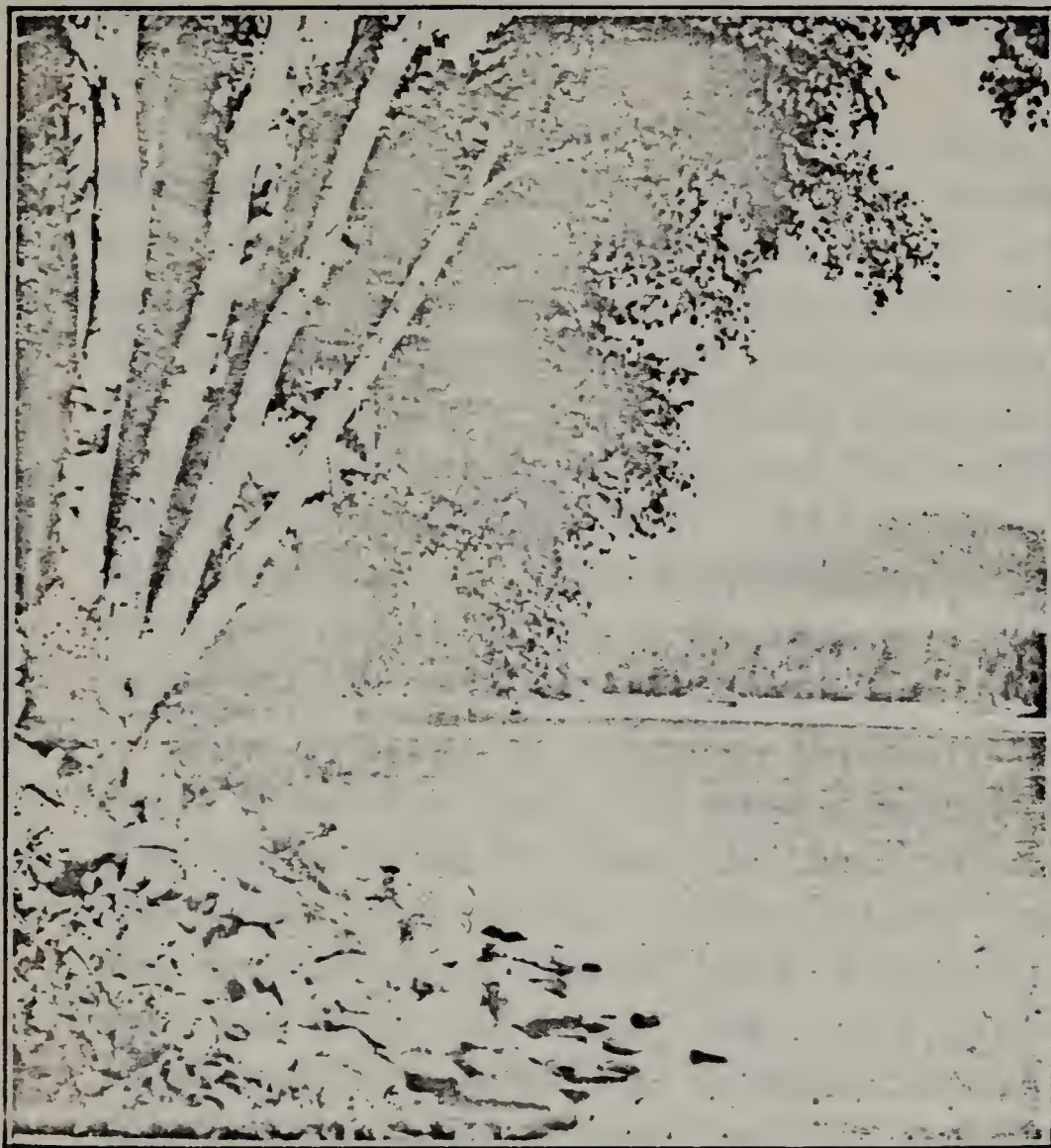
something was not as it should be. He stopped the horse, got out and examined the gig. Upon lifting the cover of the box built under its seat, he found a lighted slow match and a quantity of powder sufficient to have destroyed every vestige of himself and his equipage.

Upon another day he heard that some men were cutting timber upon a certain lot of his land. This was one of the things that haunted him—the knowledge that in his big township, his trees were constantly being felled by his fellow-townsmen and that owing to the impossibility of his being in all places at once, this state of affairs was likely to continue. However, upon this occasion he came

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

upon them red-handed. He rode in among them, a commanding figure on horseback, and ordered them to desist, at the same time threatening them with the utmost rigors of law. Thereupon they dragged him from his horse, and one of them, a powerful fellow named Huntoon, took a young tree and administered such a flogging that it was little short of a miracle that the old Squire survived it. In less than a week, however, he had ridden to Farmington, sworn out a warrant against them and a short time afterward Huntoon and his abettors found themselves arraigned in the court house of that place on a serious charge of assault. Burnham, however, had no witnesses. The men hung together and declared that instead of assaulting him he was the aggressor. In vain Burnham exhibited his marred and wounded body. The men were discharged and Burnham was reprimanded by the Judge. How much his own reputation had to do with this decision cannot with certainty be known, but as Uncle Titus Philbrick said, "Burnham got into a good many law scrapes. He lawed it a good deal."

Besides the Rangeley township, a tanyard at Meredith, and a considerable property in the town of his birth, Dan Burnham owned, at one time, the whole White Mountain Range. A tale is told concerning the sale of this now almost



A Close-Up of Lake Shore

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

national property which shows up the character of this man in the part of debtor and also shows at the same time how men on the same business footing as himself regarded him.

The sale took place in his own State of New Hampshire in a private house and was presided over by Judge Dale. Burnham sat at one end of the table, the prospective buyer at the other. As the moment approached for the consummation of the sale, the buyer of the White Mountain Range stretched forth his hand toward the middle of the table, with the money in it. At the same time he also stretched his other hand to meet Burnham's own, nor did he let go of the money with the one hand until he held the title deeds safe in his other.

This moment of cautious intensity was suddenly broken in upon in a most dramatic manner. The hands of the two men had met and parted and the money was at last in Burnham's possession. Ere he could draw himself back to an upright position and while the money was yet exposed in his hand upon the table, the curtains, which shaded the window behind him, parted; a figure came forth, a hand fell upon Burnham's wrist while a voice forbade him to draw the money to himself. The hand was not so powerful as Burnham's own, nevertheless he obeyed its pressure, for it belonged to the Sheriff of the County. The Squire had long

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE



Another View of Rangeley Lake

owed a considerable sum of money in New Hampshire which his creditors had been unable to obtain and the latter in some way getting wind of the transaction took this means of obtaining their just dues.

Besides trafficking in land Burnham (he is rarely given his title by the inhabitants of Rangeley, in strong contradistinction to his predecessor) had another occupation and indeed this may be said to have been his principal one, for to it he devoted the major part of his time. This was trading in colts and cattle. He would breed or buy them in New Hampshire and thence, with the help of a man or two, drive them to Rangeley, he riding

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

on horseback all the way. Here, in the wide, free pastures of his own township, they were raised and sent to Brighton, Massachusetts. The latter journey took about a week on the road, the drovers dickering, swapping and trading along the way.

However careful and exact Burnham was about collecting his own debts—ever to the full extent of the law, his numerous lawsuits did not tend to impoverish him. There came a time when he got into serious difficulty. To save the remainder of his property he took the poor debtor's oath, in the meantime deeding Rangeley to his brother. His oath did not save him, however, and he was put in Portland gaol. Here he stayed eleven years, steadfastly asseverating all the while that he had no property.

There are two stories told in regard to Burnham's final loss of Rangeley. One is that, his brother dying while Burnham was still in prison, the deed came into possession of his brother's heirs. They, knowing nothing of the understanding between the two men, sold the township of Rangeley to others. The second story is that after Burnham was imprisoned, no taxes were paid on his vast estate. As he vehemently disclaimed all interest in Rangeley, several men began to pay the taxes. After a number of years of these payments, these men became possessed

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

of the township, according to the Maine law in such matters. Thus when Burnham emerged from his long term in prison, he found what he had sworn to was very nearly true—he had no property.

He came back to Rangeley an old, old man. But he had still a strong vitality of body and with an equally strong vitality of spirit he started life anew.

The first stage route was then in operation, being owned by Mr. Richard Kimball. Even in the winter, according to the latter, Burnham “drove and carried mail, did a little trucking on the road, arrants, etc.”

When it was time for the stage to start (from what is now the heart of the village) Burnham started whether his passengers were present or not. There was none of that easy and kindly waiting, that accommodating spirit so habitual in country towns, to be found when Burnham drove the stage. Whatever his past reputation had been he was honest and trusty as a stage driver and his word could always be depended upon. So said Mr. Kimball.

One reminiscence of his stage-driving days still lingers in Rangeley. Upon one trip, one of his passengers, a woman, was carrying a parasol. Becoming aware that it had disappeared, she

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

searched vainly for it, and finally asked Burnham if he had seen it. "It fell out a couple of miles back," was the reply. "Why didn't you tell me?" came the indignant query. "I ain't paid to look after passengers' parasols," was the truly Burnhamesque answer.

Out of the wreck of his fortunes, Burnham had contrived to keep what, even to this day, is known as "The Burnham Pasture," bordering the shore of Dodge Pond. Here he still carried on his former occupation—the raising of cattle and horses. "He sold 'em round here when he got old. Sometimes people would come here from cities to get 'em, even from Boston."

The one-time Squire used to go back and forth from his lodging in the village to this pasture nearly every day. It was a considerable distance for a man of his age to walk, being over four miles distant from his lodging. For in his last days he stayed at Joel Hinkley's in the house formerly owned by Sam Farmer and also by John Burke, where the first tavern and post office was carried on. John Burke was a successful merchant. He built a hotel and store located on the same spot where the present Rangeley Tavern and Oakes & Badger store are now located. Squire Burnham used to go like a gentleman on horseback, rigged up, but before he died he didn't have hardly anything to wear.



One of the Rangeley Lakes from High Land

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

Whenever he went to his pasture he was always particular to take his shoes and stockings off and wash his feet when he came to a nice brook. Folks used to think that was why he lived so long, because he washed his feet so often. A story is told of Burnham in his last days at Hinkley's as follows: He rode to Phillips one day with Joel, who was carrying the mail, passengers and general merchandise. When coming home, Joel drove on to the ice at Greenvale and trotted the horses right along. Burnham sat on the seat with the driver and on account of it being a warm day, there was water on the top of the ice. The horses' hoofs splashed water and snow all over the front of Burnham's coat and into his face. When the team got to the Tavern, Joel hopped down to get the mail bag, and, to his surprise, it was gone. He turned to Burnham and asked, "Have you seen anything of the mail?" "Yes," replied Burnham, "it fell off back at Greenvale, but I didn't suppose you could bother to get it, you seemed to be in such a hurry."

All things come to an end and so at last did Burnham's life. He died sitting upright in a chair. His estate consisted of a lead quarter and the Burnham pasture, which, under agreement, came to Joel Hinkley for his keep. His body was sent back to the town in New Hampshire

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

whence he had come and it was then that the long unslaked curiosity of Rangeley in regard to his age was satisfied. The old Squire had nearly attained his hundredth birthday.

“All he cared for was his lumber, his lands and his cattle,” said Mr. Kimball, in a general summing up of Burnham’s life and character. “He gave sixty thousand dollars for his township. He thought it was going to be valuable and he thought right, but it took too long.”

Since the days of its founder and its quasi-feudal squires, Rangeley has passed through several stages. For many years it has been a “Sportsman’s paradise.”

The shores of Rangeley Lake, itself, have during the last few years witnessed a prodigious advent of “summer people.” True to its traditions, the inhabitants call them, be they dignified landowners, frivolous pleasure seekers, artists or musicians, “sportin’ people,” or, with that love for conciseness and abbreviation that distinguishes the American, “Sports.”

Ere another generation has arisen they will be the predominant type around Rangeley Lake, at least. The guide in his canoe will have vanished and the motor boat will have taken his place. The railroad is penetrating farther and farther and the honk of the automobile is heard in the land. A

PIONEER DAYS OF RANGELEY, MAINE

town improvement society has sprung up and an attractive stone library has been built, all through the efforts of these same summer people. The servant problem is becoming acute. Can more evidence of advancing civilization be offered?

Nothing, however, can take from the beauty of this wonderful region of clouds, lakes and mountains unless it experience a veritable invasion of Goths and Vandals.



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